

# Branded Restaurant Operations

March 2007



## Welcome

It's March which means spring is just around the corner and the flowers will soon be blooming. Like spring, we've got another jam-packed issue of "E-News" just bursting with lots of tools and great ideas. This month in Pickle Talk, we tackle an often overlooked important communications tool, and that's the "pre-shift meeting". No matter what you call it, holding a pre-shift meeting daily with all your team members is an excellent opportunity to quickly and informally pass information to your entire team.

In football, the quarterback always has the team huddle before they run a play. They do this to insure everyone knows what they're supposed to do and to get everyone executing "on the same page" of the playbook they've studied. When the team breaks the huddle, everyone knows exactly where to line-up, along with understanding their individual assignments for that particular play. In the restaurant business, you're the quarterback and the only way you can succeed is if your team knows what to do when the guests arrive. As the quarterback of your team, you set the tone and everyone's looking to you for direction.

Your pre-shift meeting should be short, to the point, and last no longer than 3 to 4 minutes. Any longer and you lost your team's focus. Hit upon any shift goals, highlight any potential problem areas, recognize recent outstanding performance, and promote potential areas for increased sales and service.

Since the time that follows is usually stressful, the meeting should always end on a positive note so your team members are motivated to go out and deliver exceptional guest service. The bottom-line, start making the pre-shift meeting a part of your daily routine. Your team will be "in the know" and they'll thank you for it!

Until next time, keep e-mailing us so we can share your comments and good ideas with our growing family of MWR professionals. Here's to your success!

Roger Weger  
Chief, Branded Restaurants Division

## Upcoming Grand Openings

We currently have one scheduled Grand Opening at Fort Carson, CO (Java Café on 15 March). Look for this story and more in our April edition of *E-News*. (POC: Trace Kea (703) 681-5255 or email: [trace.kea@us.army.mil](mailto:trace.kea@us.army.mil))



## **Pickle Talk- March 2007: Practice makes perfect!**

When it comes to our business....."practice makes perfect" with a structured training program that starts with well planned pre-shift meetings!

A solid in-house training plan begins with the team leader and mentor. The pre-shift meeting represents the most effective "message delivery system" you have at your disposal. As a rule, a pre-shift meeting costs very little and is time well spent keeping your team fully informed of what's important and what your expectations are. Are you conducting 3 to 4 minute pre-shift meetings to share important information? If you are not, you may be inadvertently sending the message that their input means little. This may discourage your team from sharing information that you need to know to improve your business. So encourage you team members to make suggestions and share ideas that could further enhance your programs.

Making pre-shift meetings a part of your routine will define your expectations of them, and hone their skills a little at a time, day-after-day....until practice makes perfect. As each team member feels more like a part of the process, you will be creating a true sense of an empowered and well functioning team.

Start by making communication a two-way street between you and your team members. If you act on legitimate suggestions, you'll be on your way to forming a loyal team that represents you and your facility well.

PICKLE me this: Are you currently performing pre-shift meetings in the purposeful pursuit of practice makes perfect? Are you including everyone...the dishwasher, the lane maintenance guy ....the janitor? If we expect our team to perform at their peak and provide tip-top guest service, let's ensure we provide our team members with the opportunity to provide feedback. Give them the opportunity to provide feedback on how to deliver better guest service and any tools they may need in the pursuit of that goal. Let's resolve today to open this dialog on a daily basis!

Tune in to next month's edition as we will further refine our pre-shift training objectives and continue to develop our in-house training program.

Until then, remember...a PICKLE a day keeps your guests coming back for more! (POC: Brad Puterbaugh (703) 508-2593 or email: [brad.puterbaugh@us.army.mil](mailto:brad.puterbaugh@us.army.mil))

## **MWR Branded Restaurants – "Best in Class" Award Winners 2006**

Congratulations go to the 2006 "Best in Class" award winners! Award winners will be recognized at the International Military Community Executives Association Conference held in conjunction with the National Restaurant Association trade show in Chicago, IL 16-18 May, 2007.

This year's winners are:

Strike Zone – Fort Story, VA (small: less than \$249K in annual revenue) Mr. James Bishop, Business Manager

Strike Zone – Fort Knox, KY (medium: \$250K-\$399K in annual revenue) Ms. Carolyn Hammond, Business Manager

Strike Zone – Fort Hood, TX (large: \$400K or greater in annual revenue) Ms. Barbara Cox, Business Manager

Reggie's – USAG Selfridge, MI: Ms. Janice Robinson, Business Manager  
Primo's Express – Fort McCoy, WI: Mr. John Miller, Business Manager  
Mulligan's – Fort Shafter, HI: Mr. Peter Loo, Business Manager  
Lil' Skeeters BBQ – Fort Bragg, NC: Mr. Michael Garrity, Business Manager

**Joint Services:** Strike Zone – Menwith Hill, England: Mr. Edward Campbell, Business Manager

**Most Improved (2 winners):**

Reggie's Beverage Company – Yongsan, Korea: Mr. Walter Cade, Business Manager  
Primo's Express – Fort Irwin, CA: Ms. Janet Lambert, Food & Beverage Manager

The awards are given annually to the "Best in Class" unit for achieving and maintaining the highest quality food/beverage and guest service standards established by the MWR Branded Restaurant Operations team for that brand. Units are evaluated during the year based on operational site visits, guest feedback and overall financial performance. "Best in Class" award winners receive a plaque, recognition pins for all team members to wear and a large outdoor banner to display at their unit. Congratulations again to all the winners. (POC: Bill Sewell (703) 681-5218 or e-mail: [bill.sewell@us.army.mil](mailto:bill.sewell@us.army.mil))

### **Unit Managers Training FY07**

The time is getting near for the Annual IMCEA Conference in Chicago. The conference is scheduled for 16-18 May 2007, at the Congress Plaza Hotel, and the National Restaurant Association Show will be conducted immediately afterwards, from 19-22 May.

As discussed in my two previous articles, we're conducting our Unit Managers Training in conjunction with the IMCEA, and are funding one individual to attend the conference from each of our "Best in Class" award winning installations. We're also funding the IMCEA registration fee for one individual from each of our other Branded Restaurant Operations, and one individual from each respective Region.

For those individuals who will be representing our Award winning operations, please contact Ms. Tina Hudson at 703-681-5215 in order to coordinate travel orders processing. For all other Theme Managers and authorized Regional representatives, please notify IMCEA when you are registering that you are with MWR Branded Restaurant Operations, and they will charge us for your registration fee.

For those personnel who will be funded by FMWRC, whether fully funding or paying the registration fee, we will expect you to be at our MWR Branded Restaurant Operations Update, which we are in the process of scheduling during the afternoon of Wednesday, 16 May. The Update will feature upcoming promotions and other items of interest for our team (more info to come shortly on the program). For your convenience, included is the link to the registration website for IMCEA: <http://www.imcea.com/upcomingconferences.html> (POC: Jeff Willis (703) 681-5227 or email: [jeff.willis@us.army.mil](mailto:jeff.willis@us.army.mil))

### **Labor: The Controllable Cost**

In our operating environment, labor is one of the largest single cost factors along with food costs. While labor and food are our highest cost, they can be controlled through good management practices and forethought.

Every other week, managers sit down and draft the work schedule for the upcoming two weeks. The schedule is posted; the team members review it and tell you how they can or cannot work the shifts, so you spend additional time modifying it. It's time to take control.

When sitting down to draft the schedule, you should not say to yourself, "I need three cooks, two cashiers, one bus person and a manager." You should say to yourself, "Do I have my last two weeks sales report and menu mix by day; do I have the programming/promotional calendar, monthly budget, daily MIS report, and team member schedule requests? If you don't, you should.

When it comes to scheduling, it's imperative to know how many man hours are needed to complete each job requirement; who the strong team members are; what are the top selling items; what parts of the day represent the major stream of revenue and what's happening in terms of programming.

Good managers should know who their strong team members are, and basic job requirements needed for each position. When it comes to truly analyzing requirements, great sources of information are previous menu mixes ("What's Hot, What's Not") and sales reports by day and day part. Review these reports to understand where revenue is made and at what times. Then review the upcoming calendars for events. Schedule according to the event requirements; our goal is to increase revenue and decrease labor percentages, not decrease labor. We should ensure that we're staffed to provide the best experience for our guests, maximizing revenue while minimizing expenses. Next, review your monthly budgets and daily MIS reports. Be sure to know where your dollars spent are for the year, month, week and day. Adjust man hours according to sales in order to meet the standard, but don't cut man hours that will result in cutting service. Finally, review the team member day-off request book. Try your best to accommodate, but if a request for a day off is submitted following the posting of the schedule, management should not have to spend countless hours modifying the schedule. Train your staff to be responsible in scheduling leave requests. Emergency leave requests are a separate issue and need to be handled on a case by case basis.

Now that we have addressed the basic fundamentals of work scheduling, let's briefly address labor cost percentages and revenue. There are two main ways to decrease labor percentage: First, increase revenue with existing payroll and second, cut man hours and/or operating hours. We prefer the first. Our focus as managers should not be to figure out a way to reduce team members pay and benefits to meet the financial standards, but should be figuring out how to pay them more money and how to create the revenue to ensure we meet the standard. Use creativity instead of negativity to meet the standards.

When making managerial decisions for scheduling, never forget to continuously provide our guests with the highest quality of service, at the best value possible. Our Branded Restaurant Operations managers have been provided numerous tools to increase foot traffic, revenue and most importantly offer quality products and services. All you need to do is implement programs, work with your staff and let your marketing offices do their job to help bringing guests into your facility.

In closing, controlling labor costs means managing payroll to sales, continually finding ways to increase revenue, providing quality products and service at the highest level possible and most importantly, do not take the easy way out by just cutting your team members hours. (POC: Michael Amarosa (321) 986-9251 or email: [michael.amarosa@us.army.mil](mailto:michael.amarosa@us.army.mil))

## Getting Back to Basics: Trans Fats – Don't Need Them, Don't Want Them

What is Trans fat? *Trans* fatty acids (commonly termed **Trans fats**) are a type of unsaturated fat (and may be monounsaturated or polyunsaturated).

Trans fats occur naturally, in small quantities, in meat and dairy products from animals such as cows and sheep. Animal-based fats were once the only Trans fats consumed; most Trans fats consumed today are industrially created as a side effect of partial hydrogenation of plant oils – a process developed in the early 1900's and first commercialized as Crisco in 1911. The largest amount of Trans fat consumed today is created by the processed food industry as a side-effect of partially hydrogenating unsaturated plant fats (generally vegetable oils). These hydrogenated fats have displaced natural solid fats and liquid oils in many areas, notably in the fast food, snack food, fried food and baked good industries. Vegetable shortenings are partially hydrogenated fats packaged for home use, and some margarine's contain a large portion of Trans fat.

Why be concerned? The primary health risk identified for Trans fat consumption is an elevated risk of coronary heart disease (CHD). A comprehensive review of studies of Trans fats was published in 2006 in the New England Journal of Medicine that concludes that there is a strong and reliable connection between Trans fat consumption and CHD. It's been suggested that the negative consequences of Trans fat consumption go beyond the cardiovascular risk to include: cancer, diabetes, obesity and liver dysfunction.

What is anybody doing about it? On 11 July 2003, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a regulation requiring manufacturers to list Trans fat on Nutritional Facts panel of foods and some dietary supplements. The new labeling rule allowed for immediate voluntary compliance with mandatory compliance by 1 January 2006 (companies that were granted an extension have until 1 January 2008). The regulation allows Trans fat levels of less than 0.5 grams per serving to be labeled as 0 grams per serving, or Trans fat free. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) advises the United States government on nutritional science for use in public policy and product labeling programs. NAS dietary recommendations have not recommended the elimination of Trans fat from the diet because Trans fat is naturally present in many foods, and therefore in most non-vegan diets; its removal from ordinary diets might introduce undesirable side effects and nutritional imbalances if proper nutritional planning is not undertaken.

We're taking the issue of Trans Fat very seriously, and are currently reviewing and identifying all of our food item specifications to identify which items have Trans Fat and replacing them with similar products that do not.

Here are just a few examples:

Melfry Shortening Fry Oil, Trans Fat Free - 35 lb - #40013  
Bunge Liquid Grill Fry Oil, Trans Fat Free – 3/1 gal - #15391PHA  
Whirl, Trans Fat Free – ACH - #35015

By making these simple adjustments, we can help ensure that the items we serve are not only the best items available and prepared fresh, but we're also meeting the health standards on Trans fat as set forth by the FDA.

Eat healthy and smart, and live long... (POC: Tony Marko (703) 681-3818 or email: [tony.marko@us.army.mil](mailto:tony.marko@us.army.mil))



## Test Your ServSafe Knowledge (See Page 8 for Answers)

1. Foodborne micro-organisms grow well at temperatures between
  - a) 32 degrees Fahrenheit and 70 degrees Fahrenheit
  - b) 38 degrees Fahrenheit and 155 degrees Fahrenheit
  - c) 41 degrees Fahrenheit and 135 degrees Fahrenheit
  - d) 70 degrees Fahrenheit and 165 degrees Fahrenheit
2. Which condition does not typically support the growth of microorganisms?
  - a) Moisture
  - b) Protein
  - c) Time
  - d) High Acidity
3. The type of illness that results when a person eats food containing pathogens, which then grow in the intestines and cause illness, is called a
  - a) Foodborne infection
  - b) Foodborne intoxication
  - c) Foodborne toxin-mediated infection
  - d) Foodborne gastroenteritis

## 2006 Fantasy Football

The 2006 Fantasy Football season came to an end, with the award of the season grand prize winners. See the attached link for the full details on the winners and prizes. Facilities that currently have a fantasy sports machine have been sent additional details on end of promotion wrap-up. If you have questions regarding fantasy sports contact Kristen Kea. (POC: Kristen Kea (703) 428-6119 or email:

[kristen.kea@us.army.mil](mailto:kristen.kea@us.army.mil))

<http://www.army.mil/-news/2007/02/09/1791-soldier-wins-high-definition-tiki-in-army-mwr-fantasy-football/>



## 2007 Military Long Drive Championship



Don't miss your chance to enroll in the 2007 Military Long Drive Championship. The promotion will feature a one-day long drive competition for Active Duty Service Members, Reservists and National Guard. Installations that participate in the event will receive promotional materials, local prizes and a chance to send their local long drive winner to the ReMax World Long Drive Championship in Mesquite, NV. One military service member will win \$10,000 and be named the 2007 Military Long Drive Champ. (POC: Kristen Kea (703) 428-6119 or email: [kristen.kea@us.army.mil](mailto:kristen.kea@us.army.mil))

## TEXAS HOLD EM'

Fifty Army facilities have signed up to participate in the 2007 ARMY Texas Hold Em' Championships. The program objectives are to offer great programming, which brings people into our business operations and most importantly, generates income. The installation competitions will run between 1 March and 24 April. The winner of each local competition will win a \$500 gift certificate to AAFES plus a seat at the on-line Army finals. Everyone who makes it to the final table on-line will receive exciting prizes. The All Army winner will receive a home Theater system, to include a HDTV Flat panel TV, DVD sound system and one year of DVD rental subscription. (POC: Doriann Fengler (703) 428-6089 or email: [doriann.fengler@us.army.mil](mailto:doriann.fengler@us.army.mil))



For more information about these promotions and upcoming promotions from Events Division, check out [www.mwrpromotions.com](http://www.mwrpromotions.com).

## Promotions Update

It's never too early to plan for promotions, even if the next one isn't until May 1st. The May through August seasonal promotion will feature a delicious new Grilled Chicken, Mushroom and Spinach Pizza. Creamy Alfredo sauce, tender grilled chicken, fresh spinach and mushrooms make this pizza a truly special flavor sensation.



Restaurants that serve sandwiches will run a special hot dog promotion that features giant Hebrew National hot dogs. The dogs are offered in ½ pound and ¼ pound sizes, a real hot dog lover's treat! There will be punch cards that qualify guests for free dogs and valuable prizes. BP-Events Division is coordinating the promotion. It starts June 1st and runs through 30 September. Branded Restaurant managers can run the Chicago Beef Sandwich until June or substitute an LTO until the Hebrew National

event begins.

MWR Marketing Directors have already been notified about the pizza promotion. The recipes, promo information and graphic layouts are now available to download from [www.prafulfillment.com](http://www.prafulfillment.com). (POC: Sharon Bertschi (703) 508-5894 or email: [sharon.bertschi@us.army.mil](mailto:sharon.bertschi@us.army.mil))

## What's New from Virginia?

Hi! It's great to be back with the team! I spent the last couple of weeks in Korea visiting my husband, who's forward-deployed to Korea...the "Land of the Morning Calm". What a great way to gain a fresh perspective of how our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines make sacrifices every day in order for all of us to enjoy the benefits of freedom back here at home. This visit clearly echoed home the

importance of what each of us brings to the table for the troops and their families--"First Choice Service to Those Who Serve".

On another note, it's hard to believe that Spring is just around the corner! What a beautiful time of year! One that makes you feel like you have a fresh start on life....as flowers began to bloom, birds sing and a slew of nature's critters come out from their long winter nap to enjoy fresh air at last!

With the thought of Spring, we began doing some early Spring cleaning of our own by updating our Unit and Marketing Manager listings. Special thanks to those who provided updates. We are compiling the last of these updates and will soon send out an updated listing to you by e-mail and will then post the update to our web site. The AKO e-mail addresses you provided us will allow managers to log in to the AKO Community Site that will be activated in April. Further details will be forthcoming in April's issue of E-News.

We are also happy to say that we have near-completion of our make-over of the Branded Restaurant Operations External and Internal web sites. With this said, I have some good news to share with you.....we now have our very own MWR Branded Restaurant Operations online survey which can be viewed at:

<http://armymwr.com/portal/recreation/mwrbrandedrestaurants.asp>. We ask each of to please promote and encourage your guests to complete this survey. Their feedback will let us know both our strengths and areas of improvement. At the end of the day, our goal remains the same, we want their business!

Installation Marketing Offices, we still need your help by ensuring that the following link is added to your installation web site: <http://www.armymwr.com/fmwrc/bp/brandopsurvey.htm>. Special thanks Mr. Carleton Sea, aka Maki Oki of Heroes, whose talents allowed us to launch and bring this survey to you. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or e-mail me.

In closing, I look forward to your input and feedback on how we can better serve you and in turn you better serve our guests. Until then – au revoir! (POC: Virginia Gouin (703) 681-5212 or email: [virginia.gouin@us.army.mil](mailto:virginia.gouin@us.army.mil))

## Anniversaries

15 March 2006 – Java Café, Shades of Green, FL celebrates their 1 year anniversary  
3 March 2006 – Java Café, Presidio of Monterey (Mid POM), CA celebrates their 1 year anniversary  
1 March 2006 – Java Café, Presidio of Monterey (Hobson), CA celebrates their 1 year anniversary  
21 March 2005 – Habanero/Lil'Skeeters, Picatinny Arsenal, NJ celebrates their 2 year anniversary  
3 March 2005 – Mulligan's, Fort Carson, CO celebrates their 2 year anniversary  
3 March 2003 – Lil'Skeeters, Picatinny Arsenal, NJ celebrates their 4 year anniversary  
30 March 2001 – Lil'Skeeters, Fort Bragg, NC celebrates their 6 year anniversary  
26 March 1999 – Mulligan's, Fort Dix, NJ celebrates their 8 year anniversary

## Transitions

We are sad to say goodbye to **Kerry Soccodato**. She is leaving us to join FMWRCs Business Programs Operations Division where she will be working with the Joint Services Prime Vendor Program. Kerry was the first Management Trainee to be assigned to the Branded Restaurant Operations. Since joining us, Kerry's dedicated efforts in support of the MWR Branded Restaurant Operations team have been valued by everyone who worked with or came in contact with her. Kerry



writes "I would like to thank everyone for making me a part of the Branded Restaurant Operations team for the past year. I have learned a lot from everyone and I hope to be able to continue working with all of you in my new capacity".

### Answers to ServSafe Questions

1. c) 41 degrees Fahrenheit and 135 degrees Fahrenheit
2. d) Foodborne micro-organisms do not typically grow in alkaline or highly acidic foods
3. a) Foodborne infection

### Closing Thought

*"You can accomplish much if you don't care who gets the credit"...Ronald Reagan*

Visit us on the web: [www.MWRBrandedRestaurants.com](http://www.MWRBrandedRestaurants.com)

